

EXPLORING READING MOTIVATION OF 10–14 YEAR-OLD STUDENTS

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Keywords: motivation; reading

Research suggests that motivational constructs are differentiated across various content areas or subject domains even by young children (Wigfield, 1997; Valentine, DuBois and Cooper, 2004), and that these domain-specific motives are more closely related to achievement than non-specific ones (Eccles, Wigfield, Harold and Blumenfeld, 1993). Recently, there is a trend in motivation research to explore students' learning motives within a single domain of learning, one example of this being the domain of reading (e.g. Möller and Schiefele, 2010). This study aims at the exploration of reading motivation of 10–14-year-old students. Subscales of the questionnaire (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.6\text{--}0.9$) covered eight motivational constructs: (1) attitudes towards reading; (2) social motives of reading; (3) self-efficacy in reading; (4) the causal attributions of reading successes and failures; (5) flow in reading; (6) value attributed to reading; (7) reading self-concept; (8) goal-orientations in reading. Participants were 755 Hungarian primary school students from grade 4 (ages 10–11; $n=218$); grade 6 (ages 12–13; $n=278$) and grade 8 (ages 14–15; $n=259$). Data suggested a moderate to strong relationship ($r=0.10\text{--}0.66$) between the individual motives of reading. Performance goals in lower grades are connected to favorable motives (like mastery goals), in upper grades they are connected to less favorable motives (like avoidance goals). Reading motives either stagnate or gradually decrease with age. Attitudes towards reading for school and mastery goals for reading are significantly lower at higher ages. The difference is the biggest between grade 4 and grade 6, which draws the attention to the negative effects of the transition from junior to senior level which occurs in grade 5 in the Hungarian school system. Gender differences were found in reading motivation with girls reporting higher reading self-concept ($t=-2.12$; $p=0.03$) and social motivation ($t=-6.71$; $p=0.001$), more positive attitudes ($t=-8.74$; $p=0.001$), stronger mastery goal-orientation ($t=-3.70$; $p=0.001$) for reading than boys by grade 8. Boys, in turn, report more anti-flow experience ($t=3.68$; $p=0.001$) and tend to avoid putting effort into reading more frequently ($t=3.60$; $p=0.01$). Attitudes towards reading in one's free time, the frequency of anti-flow experiences like boredom and apathy as well as reading self-concept are all affected by family background. Our study was a first attempt to study reading motivation as domain-specific learning motivation from age 10 to 14. Further longitudinal research is needed to gain a deeper understanding of students' reading motives by following their development from the start of elementary school. However, as reading motivation contributes to reading performance, results indicating a lower motivation for reading in the upper grades call attention to a need for a targeted development of reading motives at school.

This research was supported by OTKA K83850 project.